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The diplomat and the expert. British officials in Hungary in the turbulent years of 1945–1946

Introduction

The main features of Great Britain's policy towards Eastern Europe, including Hungary and Hungarian foreign policy during and after the Second World War are well known in the Hungarian literature. We also have a growing knowledge of the various aspects of British − Hungarian foreign relations during the Second World War[1]. However, the opinion of the two persons acting as diplomats in the immediate post-war period whose position and ideas interest me in this paper related to a kind of personal diplomatic history, is still of interest as they shed light on the role and perspective of experts in British foreign policy at the time, show how some British contemporaries might have perceived Soviet presence and the shrinking political space in Hungary, as well as on the type of interventions that diplomats attempted in 1945 and 1946.

The period covered by the observations of these (semi) official British diplomats is the time of the coalition transition in Hungary – dominated by left-wing parties but with political pluralism and cultural diversity – which coincides with the short period before the beginning of the Cold War in liberated but not sovereign Hungary. These are key moments, which are also key words, and which provide the reader with a reference point for reading the text. Later on, especially after 1948, all Western diplomats in Hungary were under hard surveillance, and Hungarian citizens working with them were harassed or even punished, so the diplomatic space was very limited (especially for the British, com-

[1] O. Fürj, *A brit dipomáciai jelenlét Magyarországon 1924 és 1941 között.* A *British Legation szervezeti felépítése és működése*, Ph.D. disszertáció, Debrecen 2017, https://dea.lib.unideb.hu/dea/bitstream/handle/2437/241885/1_Doktori_ertekezes_Furj_Orsolya_titkos itott.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y (accessed: 15 I 2026).

pared to the Horthy-era and the coalition period). So, compared to the post-1948 period, this was still a "golden age" for Western diplomats in terms of space.

Gascoigne in Hungary

Alvary Frederick Gascoigne (1893–1970) represented the official standpoint of the United Kingdom at the end of the war. He was an experienced diplomat who communicated his sharp observations in his reports on Hungarian home policy, the suffering of the people, the role of the Soviets, and the key persons in the politics of Hungary of the time. His reports were partly published by Éva-Haraszti Taylor in 2005 (Astra Press, Nottingham). Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne was a Yorkshire landowner, the prototype of the well- to-do country gentleman, well educated (Eton) and open-minded, but not part of the British intellectual elite. After his military service in the First World War, he entered the Foreign Office and by 1931 he was a foreign affairs adviser to the Foreign Office. According to Gascoigne's diplomatic activities in Hungary as head of the British Legation in Budapest in 1936–1938 it became clear that he had close and intimate connections with the pro-Western experts of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the moderate Conservative elements of the elite of the regime. His meetings with Lipót Baranyai and István Bethlen's wife gave the impression that Gascoigne was sympathetic to the Horthy regime. Many in the Foreign Office shared this view and may have provided some basis for this. During the Second World War he was military consul in the Tangier zone in North Africa. From the spring of 1945 to the spring of 1946, he was the *Chargé d'Affaires* of the British Political Mission in Debrecen and later in Budapest. He completed his diplomatic career as British Ambassador in Tokyo (1946–1951) and then, in Moscow (1951–1953).

The main critic of Gascoigne was Professor Macartney, who said that the British diplomat in Budapest took every opportunity to emphasize London's disinterest and inertia in Hungarian affairs[2]. According to the observations of the two diplomats, the two are very different (e.g. the critical description of Gascoigne in Macartney's report). But of course, both were here at the same time after 1945, although Macartney had much deeper knowledge and experiences on Hungarian issues. By the opinion of Macartney, Gascoigne had talked the Hungarians out of pursuing an anti-Soviet policy, but they could not have been pro-British either, so they could not have expected much help from the British diplomat. Carlile Aylmer Macartney was a distinguished historian[3] and diplomat

[2] „He loses no opportunity (...) of creating the simultaneous impression that we do not want to have anyinfluence in Hungary and could not have if we would". Minute by A. Macartney to Mr. Addis, Southern Department, FO. 29 August 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, *'Dear Joe" Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne, G.B.E. (1893–1970). A British diplomat in Hungary after the Second World War. A collection of documents from the British Foreign Office*, Nottingham 2005, p. XVIII.

[3] C.A. Macartney, *October fifteenth. A history of modern Hungary 1929–1945*, Vols. 1–2. Edinburgh 1956–1957.

who developed an expertise on the Horthy-regime. In Hungary, he earned his popularity thanks to his talks on BBC radio told in Hungarian during the war (until August of 1943). Although he generally supported the Horthy-regime, he also criticized it because of the undemocratic electoral system, the lack of land reform and for the close ties to Germany during the interwar and WWII period[4]. In 1938–1946, he was a member of the Foreign Office Research Department-F.O.R.D.) In his lecture of March 1946 given at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London), he described the heavy losses (looting, starvation, rape, forced labour, and forced migration etc.), and the possibilities and chances of post-WWII Hungary. Most of his forecasts proved to hold[5]. Of course, C. A. Macartney had only a position as semi-official expert of the British Foreign Office and in this sense, it is worth to examine the reports of A. F. Gascoigne, the first appointed British diplomat sent to post WWII Hungary. The Foreign Office records of Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne (The National Archive – TNA, Foreign Office – FO), a British diplomat, sent from Hungary to the Foreign Office contain envoy reports, which were published in English in 2005[6]. Gascoigne sent his first telegram[7] to the Foreign Office from Debrecen on 7 March 1945, and his last one on 16 May 1946 from Budapest. The British diplomat was thus a witness to the Soviet military occupation of the country, followed the events of Hungarian domestic politics, met the leading politicians of the time, and formed an opinion on the country's situation, problems, and opportunities.

Arguably, the British did not have goals to achieve with respect to Hungary. Douglas F. Howard, the head of the Foreign Office's Central Europe Division, made this clear in a memorandum in the spring of 1945: "I do not see how we can prevent the Russians from acting as they see fit in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, and to some extent in Yugoslavia, but the sooner we recognize the real situation and thus reduce the suspicion which poisons Anglo-Soviet relations, the better"[8]. On the one hand, in 1945 London was not in the position to extend its influence and further its interests in Eastern Europe (including Hungary). First and foremost, it lost its status as a great European power, a fact made clear by its Soviet and American allies in Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam. Apart from

[4] C.A. Macartney was not a hard critic of the Horthy regime, although he criticized the old, feudal elements of the system. Otherwise, he made a lot to present a moderate and objective view on interwar Hungary in the eyes of British public opinion of the time.

[5] The Hungarian translation of his lecture (Conditions in Hungary, March 18, 1946. Library of The Royal Iinstitute of International Affairs, 8/1209, p. 10) was published by R. Barta, *A magyarság vonzásában. Válogatás Carlile Aylmer Macartney írásaiból és beszédeiből*, Debrecen, 2021. pp. 98–106. In English: R. Barta, *In the attraction of Hungarians. Selected writings and speeches by Carlile Aylmer Macartney*, Jyväskylä 2025, pp. 135–146.

[6] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit. On the work and publications of É. Haraszti as a historian, see: „Klió" 2003, No. 1, pp. 173–175.

[7] The diplomatic report, addressed to Anthony Eden, gave a detailed account of the composition and activities of the Provisional National Assembly and the Provisional National Government, the points of the ceasefire and Gascoigne briefly described the main political forces and their leaders.

[8] The National Archive (TNA), No. FO 371/48192, 30 April 1945.

the Battle of Britain in the air, the island nation as a whole did not perform very well on the fronts of the World War II, and without American help, it would probably not have held out. Since British and American troops never reached Hungary's western borders, the secret 1943 British-Hungarian preliminary armistice agreement[9] could not come into force. Instead, the verbal agreement of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in October 1943 came into force, whereby the armies of the Allied Powers would essentially determine the fate of the peoples who live in the countries they occupy.

One the other hand, the British disinterest can be partly explained by their lack of information. When, during the Potsdam meeting, Stalin asked Churchill a question about London's intentions towards Hungary, the British statesman simply could not answer. Churchill's unpreparedness in this respect surprised even the members of his own delegation[10]. At this point, it is worth considering the role of experts and expertise in wartime and post-war British foreign policy. The Foreign Research and Press Service (FRPS), headed by the distinguished historian Arnold Toynbee, had been operating alongside the Foreign Office since 1942, providing research and studies to assist British foreign policymaking[11]. This group of experts developed ideas for the reorganization of the Balkans and Central and Eastern Europe during and after the war. At that time London was still active in the region, but in different ways in different countries. Romania, in June 1940, by denouncing British guarantees, provoked a British position and condemnation: "The belonging of Romania and Bulgaria is not a factor of importance either for Europe or for Great Britain, whereas Hungary, Austria and Czechoslovakia belong to Europe, both historically and geographically; these countries are therefore essential elements of European security and balance"[12]. After the war, and because of the presence of Soviet forces in Hungary, London's influence could only be officially exercised through the British member of the Allied Control. According to his colleagues Gascoigne's personality perfectly suited to represent a neutral, contemplative diplomatic position.

Gascoignes's papers contain three sets of documents that are of particular interest for us. In addition to the diplomatic cables (86 in total) relating to Alvary Frederick Gascoigne's stay in Hungary, we also find the transcript of Professor Macartney's lecture[13],

[9] For more on the armistice negotiations, see: G. Juhász, *Magyar-brit titkos tárgyalások 1943-ban*, Budapest 1978.

[10] J. Lukacs, *A párviadal. A nyolcvannapos párbaj Churchill és Hitler között 1940. május 10. – július 31*, Budapest 1993, p. 362, cited by D.A. Bán, *A közép-kelet-európai brit külpolitika és Magyarország 1939–1947*, [in:] *Magyarország és a nagyhatalmak a 20. században*, ed. I. Romsics, Budapest 1995, p. 146.

[11] A part of the FRPS documents was published in 1996 by Bán D András. Several institutions and organizations were responsible for the British political warfare in the region during the war. For details see: A. Joó, *Szervezetek, háborús célok, memorandumok. A brit politikai hadviselés Magyarország és Románia irányában 1942–1944*, Múltunk 2020, pp. 1–27.

[12] Cited by D.A. Bán, op. cit., p. 141.

[13] Carlile Aylmer Macartney (1895–1978), historian and foreign policy adviser to the Foreign Office was considered an expert on the Hungarian question from 1937. In his work *Hungary and her successors. The history of Trianon and its consequences 1919–1937*. Considered an ethnic-based and limited Hungarian border

and Gascoigne's report that he sent from Moscow to Anthony Eden, in which the ambassador discussed the Soviet foreign policy towards Asia. The diplomatic cables were written according to the rules of foreign protocol, so were mostly secret (sometimes ciphered) and were also sent to other British missions[14]. Diplomatic reports were usually addressed to foreign ministers (Anthony Eden, Ernest Bevin) or senior Foreign Office officials (Orme Sargent[15], Douglas F. Howard), but Gascoigne also sent nine reports directly to Churchill (between 25 June and 31 July 1945). Officials in the relevant Foreign Office offices (Northern Department, Research Department) added so called minutes to some of the telegrams that the British envoy in Budapest sent it. These comments sometimes differed from Gascoigne's views.

Clearly, Gascoigne did not believe that a strong British position on Hungarian affairs was reasonable, and despite their occasional differences, this was the view of his superiors, too. His main role was providing credible reports on domestic political events, as well as liaising and meeting regularly with party leaders, church and public dignitaries in Hungary. Perhaps because of his character and liberal education and his position as the representative of the official British foreign policy towards Hungary, he preferred to keep an equal distance from the leaders of the various political parties, stressing that he was happy to meet any politician, including Mátyás Rákosi[16]. Despite this observer position, Gascoigne had strong opinions on the most important domestic policy issues of the period, and he communicated these to London on several occasions. He established a wide network of political contacts in Hungary in a short period of time. Due to his moderate conservative standpoint and his old pre-1945 Hungarian contacts he had more meetings with Béla Zsedényi, President of the Provisional National Assembly, Prime Minister Béla Dálnoki Miklós, Count Géza Teleki, Archbishop of Kalocsa József Grősz, Foreign Minister János Gyöngyösi, as well as with the leaders of political parties on several occasions.

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revision to be partly justified and supportable. His book on the Horthy regime, published in 1956–1957 (*October fifteenth*…, Vols. 1–2) is a balanced and objective overview, and in some respects can still be used as a basic work of the history of the period. On Macartney's contemporary writings on Hungary, see: Á. Beretzky, *Scotus Viator és Macartney Elemér: Magyarország-kép változó előjelekkel (1905–1945)*, Budapest 2005; eadem, *Four Britons and nationalism. Henry Wicham Steed, Robert William Seton-Watson, Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and beyond (1903–1978)*, Reno 2024.

[14] Gascoigne also sent his reports to the Foreign Office, usually to the British missions in Moscow, Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia and Caserta (Italy).

[15] Sir Orme Sargent was then Under-Secretary of State for Central and Eastern Europe at the Foreign Office (FO). From 1946 he was Secretary of State for Administration and Permanent Under-Secretary of State to the Foreign Secretary.

[16] „M. Szakasits ask me whether I would receive M. Rakosi /Mattias/, the Communist leader. I said that if M. Rakosi wished to see me, I should of course be delighted to welcome him here, as I would the leaders of any of the Hungarian political parties. I thought it well, however, to stress that the initiative must be theirs and that my attitude towards the five existing political parties was merely that of an »interested observer«. See: Gascoigne to Bevin 4 August 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 151–154.

Gascoigne's analysis and diplomatic reports shed light on the actors and events of the period in a way that nuances and expands our knowledge of the period. These reports indicate the standpoints of an official British diplomat, having old experiences on Hungary and taking a relative objective outsider British observer's position without any serious British interests in the region. The telegrams sent to Churchill reflect what the contemporaries believed to be key events. Some of these are not so evident today. The cables provide information on elections, the political police, anti- Semitism, land reform, the general economic situation, prisoners of war and the deportation of the Hungarian citizens as well as on important events of the day.

As many of his contemporaries he was skeptical about the room available for the political parties to actually influence outcomes. In a letter to his close colleague and friend Orme Sargent, Gascoigne gave a relatively long assessment of his stay in Debrecen, the political situation, the role of the Russians and a fairly accurate view of the near future: "The left-wing forces in the National Assembly, the Communists, the Social Democrats and the Peasants, are presumably seeking to seize power and form a left-wing coalition government, but it is possible that they will wait until the present government has sunk into the mire of land reform before they do so... Of course, behind the scenes there are the Russians. Everything else is nothing but a puppet, controlled by the Russians, but it is unlikely that they would allow a radically left-wing government at this stage. That would be unacceptable to Moscow at the moment for a number of reasons"[17]. Moreover, Gascoigne was explicit about his disappointment about the visual message the Soviets conveyed as, in his view, these resembled that of Fascist and Nazi regimes. Since the British Political Mission moved from Debrecen to Budapest at the end of April 1945, he observed the May Day parade in the old-new capital. He likened the popular festivities of the Spanish Falangists and the Nazis and was shocked to note that the Soviet authorities had ordered not just the Hungarian communist party rank and file but everyone to take to the streets. He reported that those who stayed at home were considered Nazis. According to the telegram he sent, the people were mainly marching with red flags and communist symbols but were still broken and tired from the siege[18]. Gascoigne proved to have an eye for the contradiction of symbolic politics in the case of the state reburial of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, too. As he reported in late May, the day after the funeral: "Bajcsy-Zsilinszky is interesting from this point of view; he was not a communist, he was an anti- communist, and the current government should know that. If he had not been executed, he would hardly be an acceptable figure at present"[19] .

[17] Gascoigne to Sargent, 10 April 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 71.

[18] Gascoigne to Eden, 2 May 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 81–82.

[19] Minutes of Macauley 14/6/45. Gascoigne to Eden, 28 May 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 107.

In the spring of 1945, Gascoigne was mainly concerned with the land reform issue. He reported in detail to London on Hungarian land ownership before and after the land reform. However, he considered the introduction of the Land Act by decree to be a defeat for representative democracy and criticized its practical implementation. He found no direct evidence that such a rapid introduction of land reform by decree was forced by the Allied Control Committee (ACC or SZEB in Hungarian) headed by the Soviet Marshal Voroshilov[20]. His view reminds us that the decree appeared while the war was still going on and was still a prime concern for contemporaries. On 21 March 1945, he wrote that: "As regards the attitude of Russians towards the implementation in Hungary of Land Reform, it looks now, rather surprisingly, as if this measure may have been rushed through by order of Marshall Voroshilov although I have no confirmation of this. If true, this seems to be contrary to Russia's usual policy in the liberated countries, i.e. to encourage the Governments concerned to do all that is possible to assist the Russian war effort. The introduction of Land Reform at this critical juncture of Hungary's history, will not, (at any rate in the near future), increase Hungary's war potential"[21]. In fact, despite the large-scale propaganda activities of the government, only a fraction of the Hungarian soldiers fighting the Soviets in the Transdanubian region laid down their arms and returned home upon the introduction of land reform.

In the light of recent publications on the post-War violence in Hungary, Gascoigne's point about the background to anti-Semitism is noteworthy. During his conversation with Count Géza Teleki, the Hungarian politician discussed the rise of anti-Semitism, which he saw as a 'spontaneous' reaction against the Jews who had sided with the new regime and had joined the newly created political police in large numbers[22]. Gascoigne also discussed this new 'Jewish question' with Miklós Béla Dálnoki, naively suggesting that the religious leaders of Jewry could restrain their own radicals.

Around the summer of 1945, Gascoigne became more active in influencing opinions in centers of power outside Hungary. The excesses of the political police and the marginalization of the churches were a recurring theme in Gascoigne's discussions. On 28 May 1945, the Archbishop of Kalocsa told the British diplomat that he was under constant surveillance and could be arrested at any time for their meeting. At this instance, Gascoigne tried to intervene as he was in the role of a mediator between Archbishop József Grősz of Kalocsa and the Vatican. The report and assessment of their meeting on 28 July 1945 were sent to the Holy See[23].

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[20] Gascoigne had only limited contacts with ACC in Hungary mainly through the British members of the committee.

[21] Gascoigne to Howard, 21 March 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 26–27.

[22] In this post-Holocaust situation the surviving elements of the Hungarian Jewry had a strong feeling to take revenge on the Hungarians who did not saved them from the Nazis and the Arrowcrossmen.

[23] The Archbishop of Kalocsa informed the Vatican about the ecclesiastical aspects of the land reform, the internal political situation, the activities of the Russians, etc. See: Gascoigne to Churchill, 23 July 1945 with Minutes, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 138.

Shortly thereafter, he tried to assess and inform about Rákosi's position, communication, and character in the context of the elections to be held[24]. In these cables, the British diplomat repeatedly said that he did not see much difference between the leaders of the Hungarian Social Democrats and the Communists. The British diplomat had already described Rákosi as a strong man of Moscow and the future leader of the country, based on his abilities[25]. According to Gascoigne, Rákosi had tried to reassure and lecture the British, stressing that there was nothing wrong with Hungarian democracy, that it was the weak and incompetent Hungarian government that was to blame for all the problems. According to the communist leader, there was no terror in the country, only agricultural products had to be brought to the cities, and therefore the black market had to be eliminated by hard means. The political police, in his opinion, are amateurish and make mistake after mistake, because they are not arrest the real reactionaries. According to Rákosi, there were more than a hundred "reactionary organizations" in the country, and they needed to be combatted much more effectively. He promised the British diplomat free and democratic elections within two months, in which he said the three major parties would achieve almost equal results. Rákosi also stated that there was no Soviet-style regime on the agenda, so there would be a coalition government for at least another five years until the reconstruction of the country was completed[26]. The importance of the meeting was indicated by the fact that Gascoigne sent an unusually long telegram of about three pages to London, which Orme Sargent sent with comments to Prague and Washington, in addition to the usual destinations (Belgrade, Bucharest, Sofia, Caserta, Moscow). Gascoigne considered the Social Democrat Árpád Szakasits to have communist sentiments[27].

The election of 1945 in Gascoigne's reports

Indeed, British diplomacy was active in forming a negative opinion about a possible joint list for the national elections that Voroshilov proposed as a response to the Communists' defeat at the local election of 7 October 1945. Gascoigne reported that the idea of a coalition government had been discussed between the parties before the elections, but its implementation was postponed[28]. Politicians of the Smallholders' Party (main-

[24] After the British Conservative's defeat in the summer and Labour's election victory, Gascoigne sent a total of 29 diplomatic messages to Ernest Bevin, the new Labour Foreign Secretary.

[25] „It seems that Mátyás Rákosi will play an important role in Hungarian political life and that the Kremlin's power and influence will be exercised through his personality". See: Gascoigne to Eden, 7 March1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 1–5.

[26] Gascoigne to Bevin, 22 August 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 178–181.

[27] The British diplomat was referring to the Szakasits speech of 18 August 1945 at the 34th Congress of the Social Democratic Party, which, in his opinion, was hardly different from that of Mátyás Rákosi, who spoke at the same congress. Gascoigne to Bevin, 21 August 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 172–173.

[28] „It was further suggested that the coalition government which it had been decided by the party leaders would in any case be formed as a result of the General Elections, should be made up before the elections were

ly Zoltán Tildy and Ferenc Nagy) made several visits to the British diplomatic mission with the undisguised aim of pressuring London to take more active action against the Soviets. Although during the meetings the Hungarian politicians strongly emphasized the expected success of the Smallholders at the elections, Gascoigne was more cautious in his assessment[29].

After such events, the British were pleasantly surprised by the smooth conduct of the election, and especially by the fact that the Soviet army remained in barracks during it, and thus the military presence was hardly noticeable. Béla Zsedényi the President of the Provisional National Assembly was the first who give a detailed assessment of the election results to the British. He said that although the election was more of a referendum where the vast majority of citizens voted against Communism, the leadership of the Smallholders' Party (especially Zoltán Tildy) was in a dilemma since the serious economic situation meant that the government led by the Smallholders would have to make too many concessions to the Communists. Zsedényi believed that the best way out was a policy of continuous concessions but also that this could break up the Smallholders Party in the short term and sooner or later lead to the Rákosi party coming to power. Gascoigne agreed with this to a large extent. He was critical of the choice that the Smallholders wanted to pass on the responsibility for serious decisions of a predominantly economic nature through coalition government[30]. Gascoigne, in accordance with his task, analyzed the election results and the composition of the new government in two more detailed telegrams. In addition to providing facts and figures, he stressed that no party was satisfied with the results. The Communists were likely to try to compensate for their electoral defeat by dynamic parliamentary and government work and by winning key positions in the executive power.

During the very last days of his stay in Hungary, Gascoigne met none other than the former (1918–1919) President of Hungary, Count Mihály Károlyi and sent a cable about it. This last experience must have been a dramatic and sad event for Gascoigne, echoing his own perspective. The diplomat reported that Károlyi was disillusioned and exasperated, believing that under the present circumstances he saw little chance for the consolidation of a Western-style democracy and political culture: "Count Karolyi told me that he was suffering from great sorrow, disillusion and disgust; sorrow because of the ruins of a once beautiful capital, disillusion because of the weakness which was obviously being displayed by those in power towards the Communists, disgust because of the wholesale immorality and graft which permeated all strata of the population, both official and

held. After some ten days of crises (…). It was decided that a new coalition government should be formed after the elections, and not before them". See: Gascoigne to Bevin, 5 November 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 220.

[29] Gascoigne to W. G. Hayter, 5 November 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 216.

[30] Gascoigne to Bevin, 10 November 1945, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 225–229.

otherwise... Count Karolyi said that he would not be staying in Hungary for very long. He did not desire to have anything to do with the internal politics of the country"[31]. Although formally Mihály Károlyi received a warm welcome, the former head of state quickly came to the conclusion that he had no place in Hungarian domestic politics essentially dominated by the Soviets and the Rákosi led communist group.

Carlile Aylmer Macartney's account of his visit to Hungary in February 1946

What about the contemporary British experts? Did they believe the same? It is not easy to evaluate this phemomena, but the writings of probably the best British expert in Hungarian issues of the time, Carlile Carlile Aylmer Macartney well represents the nuanced differences between the official and semi or non-official British views on Hungary. Macartney as a pro Hungarian lobbyist, did much to make British public opinion more nuanced and less hostile to the pre-1945, the so-called Horthy regime. This was mainly achieved through his Foreign Office activities and his wartime BBC radio speeches in Hungarian. In 1944–1945, he was still confident that a left-wing but essentially Western-style regime could be established in Hungary. Historical strove for objectivity, professionalism, and accuracy in his scientific works, while in his other publicist works (articles, speeches) his sympathy for Hungarians was more evident. However, his 'sympathy' for the Horthy regime necessarily requires a more nuanced approach, since the Oxford historian-diplomat constantly called to account the system's democratic deficits, i.e. the lack of land distribution, constitutionalism, universal, equal, and secret suffrage, and the stubborn persistence of feudal social and public relations. The Professor of History at All Souls College maintained his links with Hungary after 1945, but these were more professional than political, and accordingly he never openly attacked the post-war Soviet-style Hungarian regime[32].

The best-known British expert on Hungary in the interwar period, the historian-diplomat Carlile Aylmer Macartney, in addition to his theoretical work, gained extensive practical knowledge during his many trips to Hungary, broadened his knowledge of Hungarian language, and constantly cultivated and expanded his Hungarian contacts, which he used later. Of his visits to Hungary, sponsored by the League of Nations, the British Foreign Office, and the British Council, or organized by Hungarian institutions/organizations. The one at the end of January 1946 is particularly interesting, because in his lecture based on this visit he presented a completely new Hungary, discussing the consequences of the Soviet occupation and the short and longer-term trends in domestic politics. I am

[31] Gascoigne to Bevin, 16 May 1946, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., pp. 236–238.

[32] On C.A. Macartney's post 1945 Hungarian contacts, see: R. Barta, *In the attraction*…, pp. 271–276; G. Ránki, *Találkozásaim Macartney Elemérrel*, „Élet és Irodalom" 1978, Vol. XXII, No. 27, p. 6.

publishing the full English transcript[33] of his lecture and the subsequent debate and exchange of views, on one hand because the questions and comments reveal what some of the British political and intellectual elite of the time were interested in relation to Hungary, and on the other, they give us a taste of the British debate culture of the period.

C.A. Macartney, *Conditions in Hungary*[34]

Sir Harry Haig[35], introduced Mr. Macartney.

Mr Macartney said that he had only been in Hungary for three or four weeks, after an absence of some six years[36]. He had, in consequence, a great deal of somewhat heterogeneous information which he would find difficult to convey in the time available. He would divide his talk into four parts:

The Russian occupation
The Economic Situation
The Immediate Political Situation
The Long-term Political Situation

The Russian occupation
He would take this subject first, partly because it was always the first to come up in conversation with any Hungarians, and partly because it stood a little outside his other three subjects and dominated the whole Hungarian situation.

The Russians had entered Hungary in the autumn of 1944-and they had entered fighting: there had been two million Russian troops in the country, but whether that number had lessened considerably or not, was something which no one could tell, since no figures was ever published. The Hungarian authorities estimated the remaining troops at one million, but he himself thought that was an exaggeration. He thought that there were about half a million troops, and that they were tending to leave. There was no doubt that they con-

[33] For Hungarian translation, see: R. Barta, *A magyarság vonzásában*…, pp. 98–106. I have provided explanatory and supplementary notes to the published and I have identified the contributors and discussants only where their position, influence or connection to Macartney warranted it. I have abbreviated the main parts of the lecture and the main points made by C.A. Macartney, and his own views and opinions.

[34] C.A. Macartney, *Conditions in Hungary. Marc, 18, 1946*, Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA), Chatham House, Library of RIIA, 8/1209, London 1946.

[35] Sir Harry Haig (1881–1956) British politician, statesman, British Governor of India from 1934 to 1939. He was an active member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs from 1940.

[36] It is about Macartney's visit to Hungary in 1940, when he also met Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki. Due to the war and the British-Hungarian state of war at the end of 1941, his next visit did not take place until early 1946.

stituted a very heavy burden on a country economically exhausted; and the situation was not improved by the probability that Russian troops in Austria were being supplied from Hungarian sources. Their requisitions were often done in a wasteful and badly organized manner-food would be collected and the left to rot because there was no transport to collect it, or because the troops for whom it was intended had been suddenly moved.

This occupation had an important political and psychological impact on the Hungarians--he would not pretend that the Russians were invariably wrong, nor the Hungarians invariably right: the Hungarians tended to forget that they had once occupied parts of Russia. But whatever the provocation they had certainly had cause for complaint. Soon after the Russian's arrival in Buda, they arrested some forty to fifty thousand in the streets and interned them as prisoners of war: the story run that the Russians had officially claimed that number of prisoners at the capture of Buda, and had actually taken next to none, and that these so-called prisoners of war had been interned to bear out Stalin's reports. Some were sent to work in Russia and had not returned: some were sent to fight the Austrians: and some were eventually freed.

Apart from this there was continual looting-particularly of watches; the Russian fondness for watches had become a joke in Hungary. There were also causes with women[37]. Stories of these incidents undoubtedly tended to become exaggerated, but, on the other hand, it would not be wise to dismiss them all as unreliable. Members of the Mission had very few intimate friends in Hungary, and no woman do inform a casual acquaintance that she had first-hand experience of Russian licentiousness. He thought the behavior of the earlier troops had been very bad, but it had improved as the older fighting men had been replaced by younger soldiers, probably recruits fresh from Russia: there were not many troops in Budapest now. It was unfortunate that such incidents still occurred; as it left a lasting and unpleasant impression in Hungary: the day before he had left the bodies of four girls had been discovered covered in the pile of rubbish, left in some recently vacated barracks. No one was in the streets at night alone in Budapest: an invitation to dinner meant an invitation for the night, unless a car could be hired for the return journey.

He felt convinced that there was a deep-rooted dread and hatred of the Russians now-not least among the poorer classes. It sometimes happened that the more educated people had had a Russian officer billeted on them and had been able to speak a little Russian or Serbian, so that their impressions were fairly amicable.

[37] On the wider aspects of the wartime violence against Hungarian women see: *Elhallgatva. A háborús erőszaktétel története és megjelenítése*, eds. E. András, J. Mélyi, A. Pető, Budapest 2022, p. 299.

The peasants and workmen had suffered most from the requisitioning policy of the Russians, and he did not think that any amount of improved behavior would wipe out these bitter memories.

The economic situation

Mr. Macartney felt that there was something misleading in the word "situation", since it implied at least a degree of stability, and he doubted whether-with the exception of Poland-any country in Europe was in such a chaotic state as Hungary. Until 1944 she had probably suffered less, but in that year several things happened in quick succession. Firstly, the Germans left the country taking with them everything that they could lay hands on: fighting went on all over Hungary for six months, from September to May: and there was heavy, material destruction, particularly in Budapest, and in the hill of Buda, where the Germans made a last stand. Then there was a complete collapse of the communications system, all bridges were blown up, and the entire rolling stock from the railways was removed to Germany, where it was now sitting in the American zone. Finally, the Russians occupied the country, requisitioning or looting all food, and other supplies. There was also a good deal of native looting and smuggling.

The food situation was appalling. There were places in the country where it was quite good-a district in the northeast, for instance, protected by the two arms of a river where a bridge had been demolished. The inhabitants made sure it was not rebuilt sufficiently to take lorry traffic and thus protected themselves from requisitioning raids[38]. Other parts of the country were not so fortunate, and in the towns, it was very bad. They had a small basic ration of bread, occasionally, of maize and beans: sometimes there were potatoes and salt which were shared out on the ration cards. He had been three times to the midday meal at the Budapest University – the main meal of the day – where twice they had had soup, and once a small helping of noodles as well.

Financially speaking, Hungary had hardly any existence: inflation was quite unchecked and unbounded. When he had been there the pound had been worth a million pengő and the dollar worth 750 thousand pengő. He thought the pound might have increased in value six times by now. Money meant nothing – a professor's salary was about 250 thousand pengő a month, only usable for buying a newspaper, or stamps, or for riding on a tram: otherwise, everything was done by barter. The big factories and the ministries had group rationing schemes which provide meals, such as he had had at the University, for

[38] This was most probably the Bodrogköz region and the Tisza bridge in Tokaj or the Bodrog bridge in Sárospatak, Nort-East of Hungary. Macartney visited Sárospatak during his trip to Hungary at the end of January 1946. See: Organizations in Liberated Hungary. Ministry of Information-Related papers, The National Archive (TNA) FO 930/262.

their worker. Bargaining for wages had been replaced by bargaining for better meal, with more calories for the worker's relations at home.

People not covered by these schemes made groups of their own and sent someone out to the country to barter clothes for food. Even really destitute families, once wealthy, still had servants, and still lived-though now somewhat cramped with extra tenants-in their pre-war homes. A maid was sure of her own room, which was a great asset. It was usually she who had relations in the country and did the bartering for food. He had not heard of any deaths through starvation, but he could not imagine how they continued to live; and he wondered what would happen when there were no longer clothes to barter for food.

The problem of Russian reparations was another heavy burden-though this was not out of proportion, and he thought that, if Hungary was given time, and could spread payment over five years, for instance, from1950 or 1951, the reparations could be managed. At present it was impossible. The lack of machinery and equipment removed from Hungarian factories as part of the reparations breaks the production chain and does not help to increase production. But this is not good for the Russians either, because they find it difficult to integrate these machines into their own production structure. What factories yet remained in production were now at work on preparation orders: there was a certain amount of finishing work done on materials sent from Russia. When these products were finished, the larger part was returned to Russia, a part went to the black market, and a part was distributed, more or less fairly to whatever section of the population needed it most. The goods hardly reached the shops at all, and while he thought that the situation would improve after the next harvest, he did not see how production was going to revive.

The short-term political situation

The short-term view of the situation was hopeful. After the liberation the government of Hungary had been entrusted to a coalition in which were represented the Communists, the Social Democrats, the National Peasants-a group of intelligent intellectuals espousing the cause of the landless agricultural workers-, the Smallholders and the Independent Bourgeoisie. These remained in power until the 1945 elections, with the exception of the Independent Bourgeoisie and some Trade Union representatives who were thrown out meanwhile. After the elections the Independence Front Coalition continued-the Smallholders Party had polled some 50–60% of the votes but very rightly had not had enough confidence to form a government[39]. The Social Democrats and the Communists had pol-

[39] R. Barta, *Brit követjelentések és a magyar belpolitika: 1945–1946*, [in:] *Tiltott történelmünk 1945––1947*, ed. J. Horváth, Budapest 2006, p. 84. In fact, the smallholders wanted to share the responsibility for the serious government decisions that awaited them with their future coalition partners.

led about 15–20% of the votes[40]. There were some reallocations of the ministries, but the government seemed to be proceeding with an agreed programme in harmony-even with wisdom.

In fact, there was not much that any government could do: There was universal agreement on the necessity for re-establishing communications and securing more coal and more food. The Communists were amongst the most energetic and intelligent in prosecuting this programme-and they and the Social Democrats had done good work in the summer of 1945, by persuading the working men of the necessity for carrying on at work.

The long-term political situation

This presented a different picture; one of continuous unrest, agitation, and shouting: there were frequent street meetings in Budapest airing the view that reaction in Hungary would be crushed. In spite of the fact that no party suggested doing anything not on the 1944 programme-there was an atmosphere of extreme political crisis, as if Hungary were in a 1919 situation.

This was largely the fault of the Communists. After the fall of the Communist government in 1919 there had been a complete reaction, and though some individual Communists remained, they were very few in number, and the party organization did not even exist in an underground form. When the Russians entered the country in 1944, however, they brought with them some fifty men from Moscow, to create a Communist party, which was to form part of the Coalition government. They recruited the main body of the party from the former Arrow Cross extremists who had been interned by the Hungarian authorities, and whose general views were very similar to those of the Communists, except that they were anti-Semitic, and revolved round Berlin rather than Moscow as a centre. They were offered the choice of continued internment or membership of the Communist party, and large number who chose the latter alternative formed a useful rank and file-though they naturally had no say in policy. Some others were genuine Communists, some were opportunists, and some came from the Social Democratic party. It was the men from Russia-the Muscovites as they were called-who held power in the Communist party: they were able men, mostly of Hungarian origin or Magyar-speaking, mostly Jews, Moscow trained and Soviet citizens-and it was from this point of view alone that they looked at Hungarian affairs.

The political conflicts in Hungary were fundamentally concerned with the future orientation of the country-whether Western or Eastern influences were to predominate: it was

[40] For the exact results of the November 1945 elections, see: I. Romsics, *Magyarország története a 20. században,* Budapest 2010, pp. 190–191.

safe to say that the entire country was split between the Communist leaders and a proportion of their followers-and the rest of the country.

Mr. Macartney had broadcast regularly to Hungary during the war[41], and was a well--known figure there: he had been interested to note that whereas the Communist leaders received him politely, but with the definite attitude that when his next came he would inevitably be liquidated, although possible with regret-the rest of the population, without distinction of class and religion had welcomed him with warmth and understanding. He had been gratified and touched and felt that there was no doubt that most of the people wanted a Western orientation for Hungary.

He could not say what the future of the country would be: he did not know what the real reason for the resumption of the Communist offensive might be. He did not feel the situation should be exaggerated-it was partly fear, partly automatic: it was their training which made it difficult from them to join with the bourgeoisie, and which made them require an opponent. Partly, no doubt, it was a reflection of the reaction between Britain and the U.S.S.R. He wondered whether the Communist leaders would be given orders to bring about a situation in which the coalition government could be declared impossible. If they had such orders, and were backed by the Russians, they could do anything-though a Communist régime would be intensely unpopular. It was an unfortunate effect of the present situation that the opponents of the communism tended to crystallize round the extreme right. In this way, he felt, some of the most valuable elements in Hungarian politics-the Social Democrats and the best of the Smallholders-lost considerable power.

Comments

Sir Harry Haig thanked Mr. Macartney for a vivid account of conditions remote from our own circumstances. The Countess of Listowel[42] asked what was the role of the political police? And she said that it was her impression that the Communists were out to split the Smallholders: the right wing was the older part of the Smallholders, and could not be called reactionary, but if the Communists succeeded, they could put the governing wing in a minority; and there was a bill in existence by which anyone who resigned could be called upon to give up his mandate. She wondered whether the Russian attacks in Poland, the attacks on the Smallholders, and those on the "reaction" in Roumania and Bulgaria were not all part of a larger plan in which Hungary was not really important, because it depended on relations between the big powers.

[41] On C.A. Macartney's radio appearances during the war, see: M. Pál, *Jó estét kívánok, itt Macartney Elemér beszél. C.A. Macartney és a BBC magyar adása*, [in:] *Angliától Nagy-Britanniáig. Magyar kutatók tanulmányai a brit történelemről*, ed. T. Frank, Budapest 2004, pp. 340–356.

[42] On the activity of Countess of Listowel, see : R. Barta, *In the attraction*..., pp. 59–80.

Mr. C.A. Macartney said he would take the last point first. He agreed that Hungary, by herself, was relatively unimportant- but he could not say whether the communist maneuvers were part of a general plan or not. He had not mentioned political police because his time was short: they were a definite grievance. They have been mainly recruited from the extremists amongst the Jews, who had suffered, and would not forget their suffering. The organization was not run by a communist, however, and though abuses were rightly attributed to take police, it must not be forgotten that this was not the first time in that Hungary had had political police. He did not think the Countess Listowel was quite right in her analysis of the attack on the Smallholders. He felt that there was some justification for complaint against them. Since the original programme had been drawn up the right-wing parties had been prohibited, but the voters were not disfranchised. Men of right-wing sympathies had got themselves returned by right wing voters, posing as Smallholders, though they were, in fact, Conservative-and often large landowners. In this way elements were introduced into the government which did not represent the original coalition parties. Those attacked often did not agree with the Government programme-though, of course, there could be no denying that the Communists did want to weaken the Smallholder's Party.

Michael Zvegintsov said that the same thing was happening all over Eastern Europe, and he wondered what was the purpose of such a campaign of fear. It had turned the common people against Russia – he had observed it again nag again In Eastern Germany with the refugees from Eastern Europe. He thought perhaps the Russians had realized that the situation was uncertain and needed clarification and were taking action in the form of this desperate attack. Relations between the great powers did not affect the matter-it would be impossible to exorcise the fear of Russia that prevailed: he thought that the Communists were afraid of an appeal to public opinion.

Miss Freda White asked about land reform in Hungary. She confessed that she was ignorant in the matter, but she felt it affected the situation. She would have thought it a reform which could have been postponed, in view of the acute food shortage in Hungary, since conversion from large to small scale farming nearly always involved a drop in production at first.

Mr. C.A. Macartney said that it was a measure which could not have been put off, politically speaking.

It was supported by all the Coalition parties and was on the government programme. Even if the land had not been divided up with legal sanction, he thought it would have been done illegally.

In fact, there had been some increase in production: the old and experienced smallholders had done very well, though the newcomers had been handicapped by the difficulty of getting tools or seed. He thought that if the land reform had not taken place, there would have been no production at all on the big estates non divided. The large landowners were mostly living outside Hungary, and it was very difficult to get labour. In present conditions there would be less produce for the general market than the big estates had produce formerly, but it would not be fair to judge the land reform for another ten years.

Mr. John Epstein asked how the ordinary people had reacted on Hungary's becoming a republic: had they minded that their country was no longer a kingdom?

Mr. C.A. Macartney said that he thought that majority had not wanted the change. It was shaming for Hungary that only one person who had vigorously protested was a woman: Sister Margaret Schachter[43]was small and frail, but she had saved Jews from persecution and was running a small political party of her own. There was a saying that there were only two men in Hungary today, and that they both wore petticoats-Sister Margaret was one and the new Archbishop[44], a man full of courage, was the second.

Mr. John Epstein asked how he had finally got to the consistory? Mr. C.A. Macartney did not think he had been really prevented from going-it was merely a question of the usual Russian delays in granting any pass.

Miss Freda White asked for news of Transylvania. Mr. C.A. Macartney said he had not been there, and would prefer not to say anything, though he understood it was a complete rocket.

Lt. Col. H.H. Lloyd asked whether the civil police were armed, and whether they were loyal to the government? He also asked what was the position of the Russian Army in Hungary?

Mr. C.A. Macartney said he would answer the second question first: the role of the Russians was that of any army occupying a country after war until peace declared. They did not to much to maintain law and order, but they had patrols on duty to examine papers: there were Russian police on the only bridge out of Budapest to see that Russian vehicles had priority in crossing. He would not call the police civil police in either sense of the

[43] On Margit Schlachta's career, see: I. Mona, *Schlachta Margit*, Budapest 1997.

[44] For more details on the career of József Mindszenty, see: M. Balogh, *Mindszenty József*, Budapest 2002.

words: they were neither civil nor police. The Minister of the Interior[45], who had been responsible for their constitution, had been corrupted by his wife, and the police were very unpopular. The old gendarmerie had been scrapped, and the two police very thoroughly sifted: the new civil police were Communists, but not Jews, and though commonly referred to as armed bandits, they were said to be improving.

Miss J. M. Westley asked whether the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) had done anything to relieve the food situation in Hungary? Mr. C.A. Macartney said that some stuff was coming in unofficially. UNRRA had met with difficulties both from our side and the Communists, but eventually an agreement had been reached.
Mr. J.R. Wraight said that supplies should begin to enter the country in April; they were to be handed over to the Hungarian government who would be responsible for their distribution. In the matter of land reform, he thought that circumstances made it difficult for the government to put up a good defence for their policy. If any food surplus was announced it be scooped up immediately, and therefore the figures issued were always on the pessimistic side. Similarly, with food collection in general, the figures were not a good advertisement. Mr. C.A. Macartney agreed but said the harvest had been below normal even so.

Miss Dorothy Fraser said that she understood from friends of hers that Hungarians in Transylvania were having a very bad time. Major Hugh Seton Watson[46] said that the Romanians were suffering equally badly.

Sir Harry Haig thanked Mr. Macartney for his talk. It was extremely valuable that he had been able to analyze Russian policy in the Hungarian area: if the same thing could be done for a different countries in a similar position it might help us understand Russian world policy.

18 March 1946, Chatham House, St. Jame's Square, S. W. 1.

Conclusions

The documents of Sir Alvary Frederick Gascoigne's activities in Hungary add essential diplomatic sources to our knowledge of Hungarian history in and soon after of

[45] The Hungarian Minister of the Interior until 20 March 1946 was Imre Nagy, followed by László Rajk.

[46] Hugh Seton Watson (1916–1984) British historian, political scientist, son of Robert Seton-Watson. He served in British military intelligence during the Second World War. In his publications on Eastern Europe and Hungary, he strove for impartial objectivity. In 1981, three years after Macartney's death, he wrote the still useful summary of the Oxford historian-diplomat's career. See: H. Seton-Watson, *Carlile Aylmer Macartney 1895–1978*, „Proceedings of the British Academy" 1981, Vol. LXVII, pp. 411–432.

1945. This will not only help specialists in the field but will also give the wider readership a glimpse into the exciting world of diplomatic history. Gascoigne sought to present a decidedly objective picture of the domestic political events of the period, but it was also clear that he was more sympathetic to the bourgeois parties and their representatives and to the Catholic clergy. He had a good sense of the backlashes of the land reform, the Soviet intentions behind the internal political struggles and was apt in his characterization of Hungarian politicians. He represented the British lobby at a time when many still believed in the future of Hungarian democracy. But Gascoigne was no longer backed by the British Empire. After 1945, London was unable to enforce its old great power policy, either in Eastern Europe or elsewhere. Without real means and power, the centuries-old values of British political culture and the ideals of Western democracies were extremely difficult to represent in a country where the Soviet Red Army was in power. Despite the limited British involvement, an outside observer's assessment, and analysis of the situation, by a diplomat who was decidedly impartial and largely objective, can add nuance and diversity to our knowledge of the period. The benefits of this are obvious even if we know that Britain's influence on the fate of Hungarians in and after 1945 was and was only possible with extremely limited means and only with a degree of activity commensurate with its own[47].

Carlile Aylmer Macartney, as pro Hungarian lobbyist, did much to make British public opinion more nuanced and less hostile to the Horthy regime. This was mainly achieved through his Foreign Office activities and his wartime BBC radio speeches in Hungarian. In 1944–1945, he was still confident that a left-wing but essentially Western-style regime could be established in Hungary. Historical strove for objectivity, professionalism, and accuracy in his scientific works, while in his other works (articles, speeches) his sympathy for Hungarians was more evident. However, his 'sympathy' for the Horthy regime necessarily requires a more nuanced approach, since the Oxford historian-diplomat constantly called to account the system's democratic deficits, i.e. the lack of land distribution, constitutionalism, universal, equal and secret suffrage, and the stubborn persistence of feudal social and public relations. The Professor of History at All Souls College maintained his links with Hungary after 1945, but these were more professional than political, and accordingly he never openly attacked the post-war Soviet-style Hungarian regime.

[47] „British influence in Hungary has no chance against that of the Soviets (...). It is obvious that Hungary will for many years be a Soviet annexed state, where Communist influence will prevail". See: Gascoigne to Churchill, 23 July 1945. Minutes of J.M. Addis, [in:] É. Haraszti-Taylor, op. cit., p. 138.

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The diplomat and the expert. British officials in Hungary in the turbulent years of 1945 –1946

Summary: This study presents and contextualizes the diplomatic reports of Alvary Fredrick Gascoigne, head of the British Political Mission in Hungary in 1945–1946, as well as the lecture delivered by Carlile Aylmer Macartney in March 1946 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London), based on his visit to Hungary in February 1946. Drawing on recent research, the article examines official and semi-official British perceptions, experiences, and activities in Hungary in 1945. Although British officials had well-grounded knowledge of events in Hungary, they had little real influence over them. Nevertheless, their official and semi-official reports made an important contribution to the British understanding of developments in Hungary and may have played a pivotal role in the emergence of the pro-British Hungarian elite during and shortly after WWII.

Keywords: Alvary Frederick Gascoigne, Carlile Aylmer Macartney, British strategy and diplomacy, Hungary in 1945, British diplomatic reports

Diplomat und Experte. Britische Beamte in Ungarn in den turbulenten Jahren 1945–1946

Zusammenfassung: Die Studie präsentiert und kontextualisiert die diplomatischen Berichte von Alvary Fredrick Gascoigne, dem Leiter der britischen Politischen Mission in Ungarn in den Jahren 1945–1946, sowie den Vortrag von Carlile Aylmer Macartney, gehalten im März 1946 am Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, London), der auf seinen Erfahrungen während der Reise nach Ungarn im Februar 1946 basierte. Der Artikel stützt sich auf neue und aktualisierte Forschungsergebnisse und zielt darauf ab, die offiziellen und halboffiziellen britischen Sichtweisen, Erfahrungen und Aktivitäten in Ungarn im Jahr 1945 darzustellen. Obwohl sie über fundierte Informationen zu den Ereignissen in Ungarn verfügten, hatten sie keinen wirklichen Einfluss darauf. Ihre offiziellen und halboffiziellen Standpunkte und Informationen leisteten einen wichtigen Beitrag zu dem, was die Briten über Ungarn wissen konnten, und könnten eine entscheidende Rolle bei der Entstehung einer pro-britischen ungarischen Elite während und kurz nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg gespielt haben.

Schlüsselwörter: Alvary Frederick Gascoigne, Carlile Aylmer Macartney, britische Strategie und Diplomatie, Ungarn im Jahr 1945, britische diplomatische Berichte

Dyplomata i ekspert. Brytyjscy urzędnicy na Węgrzech w burzliwych latach 1945–1946

Streszczenie: Studium przedstawia i kontekstualizuje raporty dyplomatyczne Alvary'ego Fredricka Gascoigne'a, szefa Brytyjskiej Misji Politycznej na Węgrzech w latach 1945–1946, oraz wykład Carlile'a Aylmera Macartney'a wygłoszony w marcu 1946 r. w Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House, Londyn), oparty na jego doświadczeniach z podróży na Węgry w lutym 1946 r. Wykorzystując nowe i zaktualizowane badania, artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie oficjalnych i półoficjalnych brytyjskich postrzegań, doświadczeń oraz działań na Węgrzech w 1945 r. Choć dysponowali dobrze ugruntowanymi informacjami o wydarzeniach węgierskich, nie mieli na nie realnego wpływu. Ich oficjalne i półoficjalne stanowiska oraz informacje stanowiły ważny wkład w to, co Brytyjczycy wiedzieli o Węgrzech i mogły odegrać kluczową rolę w istnieniu probrytyjskiej elity węgierskiej w czasie i wkrótce po II wojnie światowej.

Słowa kluczowe: Alvary Frederick Gascoigne, Carlile Aylmer Macartney, strategia i dyplomacja brytyjska, Węgry w 1945 r., brytyjskie raporty dyplomatyczne